

# The T.K.D. Flash

## A Publication of the Association of Academies of Martial Arts

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On October 8, at the Neenah Menasha YMCA the Association of Academies of Martial Arts Fall Classic Tournament was held at the invitation of Fox Valley TaeKwon-Do. The Tournament Promoter was Dr. John Butitta; Tournament Director F.M. Van Hecke, Chief Referee Mr. Kevin McDaniel.. In addition to to the pattern, sparring and team pattern events, this year's featured event was a breaking competition. A few excellent practitioners collected medals in all four events. Participating were students from Fox Valley TaeKwon-Do (WI), National TaeKwon-Do Academy (IL) , Mr. Braxton Miller's S.O.C.T.K.D. (IL), Sheboygan Academy of Martial Arts (WI), AMAC Middleton (WI), AMA Green Bay (WI), and the Grafton AMA (WI).

On October 22 a gup level test was held at the Special Needs Academy of Martial Arts. Mr. Luke Mattias, Mrs. Mary Lubner, and Mr. VH presided. Tony Mattias cornered.

We are excited to announce that Sereff World Camp 2006 will be held at the YMCA Snow Mountain Ranch of the Rockies, June 18 - June 23rd at 2:00 pm. Any questions, please email or call 303-466-4963.

The C.E. Sereff Essay Contest is sponsored by the Association of Academies of Martial Arts. First Prize is a full scholarship to the Sereff World Camp in June of 2006 valued at \$450.00. For a complete set of contest rules, contact Mr. VH at [fmvh@execpc.com](mailto:fmvh@execpc.com). prior to December 1, 2005.

A Black Belt Test will be conducted in Middleton WI on January 7, 2006. Those interested should contact their instructors. Instructors should contact Mr. Kevin McDaniel, [KmcDaniel1@tds.net](mailto:KmcDaniel1@tds.net).

There was a gup level test in Charlotte October 8

A Halloween Party was held at UNCC AMA on October 8.

There will be a Gup Level Test in Skokie at National TaeKwon-Do December 13.

And in DesPlaines, the Dee Park District will be the site of another Gup Level Test on December 14.

Meanwhile, a Gup Level Test will be conducted by Mr. Jeremy Kempka on December 17 in Charlotte NC.

Why waste effort on a school newsletter? Contribute to the Flash and your news (and distribution) becomes our responsibility. Free P.R. for your school, your students! Show your students that they matter outside of your four walls.

### SPARRING AND PATTERNS INSTRUCTIONAL COURSE

Master Earl Weiss will conduct a day-long course in sparring and patterns on Saturday, December 10 at Cadillac's National Guard Armory commencing at 9:00 a.m. Contact Steve Osborn, 231-775-2806 or [sosborntkd@hotmail.com](mailto:sosborntkd@hotmail.com).

It is a well known parable: Know your enemy and know yourself, and you will not be defeated in 1000 battles.

On Oct. 29, 2005 National Taekwon-Do Academy Inc. hosted Canadian team Coach Marie Messier, and 3 assistants to review pattern standards for ITF competition, as well as sparring drills, tactics, and techniques.

A brief description of Ms. Messier is 100 lbs. of pure dynamite. It is a thing of beauty to see the patterns performed at Championship level.

All in attendance felt it was well worth their time.

As an aside, rumor has it that NTA students did disproportionately well at the recent tournament in Neenah Wisc. While this is due in large part to their individual talent and tenacity, perhaps their training played a part as well. If you missed the seminar, perhaps you missed a chance to "Know your enemy".

BOh, well.

--Master Earl Weiss

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### THE UNCONVENTIONAL FIRST STRIKE

By Paul W. Bouchard, 4<sup>th</sup> Dan

[Editor's Note: Mr. Bouchard submitted this essay as a portion of his Fourth Dan requirements. [The Flash](#) welcomes him to our pages.]

The skeletal composition of the human hand, combined with the attached tendons and controlling muscles of the arm, is a great wonder of mechanical engineering.

This engineering marvel is composed of approximately 29 bones in the human hand which comprise some of the smallest bones in our body. Subsequently, when the hand is clenched in a tight fist for the purpose of striking an object, i.e. an opponent's head, chances are high that the resulting impact will produce trauma to the striker's hand as well as the head of the opponent.

Considering, also, the 29 major joints and hundreds of ligaments, muscles, nerves and arteries that make up this composition, it's no wonder that this appendage of the body can be equal parts lethal weapon and fragile tool.

Conversely, the human skull is a thick, bony container designed to protect the brain from trauma such as that delivered by a hand strike.

Though not indestructible, the skull and attached jaw bone represent hardened objects upon which the striking hand will meet resistance. It's obvious why martial artists wear protective gloves during sparring matches lest they cause significant injury to themselves and opponent alike with one well targeted punch to the head.

A number of years back, while attending a Sunday morning "black belt only" work out session, the guest instructor, Dr. Greg Youstra, challenged the class participants to strike the vertical surface of a set of folded wooden bleachers with a straight-on closed fist punch. Or choose to deliver the same hit with an open handed palm heel strike. Mind you, these wooden bleachers did not have the same flexural properties as a piece of 1 x 12 soft pine typically used for board breaking demonstrations. Needless to say, everyone chose the latter option of hitting the bleachers with an open hand. The point made with this exercise was that an equal or greater amount of force could be delivered with an open hand as that of the closed fist against a hard surface with negligible effect on the hand. This same strike against the bleachers with a closed fist would likely have resulted in considerable injury to the hand as anyone with similar experience would attest to. We all undoubtedly know at least one fellow martial artist who has severally injured or

broken his hand delivering a closed fist punch to a stack of soft pine wooden boards: an oxymoron to say the least.

That's not to say there isn't a place for a well connected closed fist punch but perhaps a lower and softer part of the body is in order other than the opponent's head. The body can generate tremendous power for punching. But unfortunately the bare fist is not suited to deliver that power to solid targets without injury. Even famed boxer Mike Tyson, arguably one of the best professional boxers of our era, suffered a broken hand in 1988 after "winning" a street scuffle with a straight right punch to his opponent's nose. However broken bones are not the only injury the hand is susceptible to when striking an opponent's head with a closed fist. In addition, the skin between the knuckles is likely to tear open allowing the assailant's blood to enter the open wound at the moment of impact. Potential contact with the opponent's teeth leaves the hand at risk for infection and vulnerable to broken metacarpals or cuts in the tendons.

In the real world our tactics for self-defense on the street will rely more on practical application and immediate response than the strategy we implement in a controlled, competitive sparring environment or dojang setting. We're likely not to function in the same manner in which we

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train if confronted by an assailant on the street who wishes to do us bodily harm or worse.

In a critical or life threatening situation, the “fight or flight” reflex manifests itself. This reflex is “adaptive human survival behavior resulting in increase heart rate and cardiac output, higher blood pressure, accelerated respiration, greater carbohydrate metabolism and virtually instantaneous supercharging of the body. At the same time fine motor skills grossly deteriorate, dexterity noticeably decreases and you may also experience an altered state of perception.”<sup>1</sup>

One is indeed not cool, calm and collected at this point. The accuracy of your striking is compromised due to the adrenaline dump that will occur when you’re terrified of the moment. This stress and alarm reaction is seen in professional, mixed martial arts events where accuracy and technique are replaced with wild swings and a ground and pound onslaught.

If confronted with a real life situation where you are forced to defend yourself by resorting to physical violence, the pre-emptive strike should be the strategy of choice. Most aggressors will close the gap

<sup>1</sup> Excerpt from “Self Defense – Physiology / Psychology of a Gun Fight”.

between you and him with the intent of doing you bodily harm. Waiting for the assailant to initiate the attack and then having to defend against it is indeed a dangerous proposition.

If you cannot avoid the confrontation and violence appears imminent, you should consider striking pre-emptively with the following technique.

The open hand power slap or combat slap is a simple yet extremely versatile hand technique to use when initiating the pre-emptive strike. It is a tactic that can generate a tremendous amount of power yet does not require a great deal of accuracy to be effective with your target area being the entire side of your opponent’s head.

With this tactic you are striking with the whole of your open palm and fingers as opposed to the smaller area of your knuckles only. The extended fingers allow for a possible eye rake given the appropriate angle of the strike. Of equal importance is that negligible injury to the hand should be expected.

The effectiveness of this open hand technique is often misunderstood and unappreciated. Security personnel relying on this technique and who need to protect themselves on a regular basis at rowdy events, attest to the power slap’s impact as a pre-emptive technique, claiming

80 percent of the encounters were knockouts and the remaining 20 percent of assailants were incapacitated.

The power generated from a combat slap was witnessed in an early Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC 3) in which 5’ – 11”, 200 pound, ‘Giant Killer’ Keith Hackney knocked down 6’ – 8”, 600 pound Emanuel Yarbrough with a single, open hand strike, thus laying victory to his bout.

The mechanics of the power slap are different from that of our conventional closed fist strikes which latter techniques combine simultaneous hand and hip movement. The power slap is a circular, natural movement that is similar to the movement of throwing a baseball.

The essence of a powerful and effective slap is two-fold.

The first key is proper relaxation. In contrast to tensing the fist at the moment of impact you want your hand to have as little tension as possible for maximum energy transfer.

Completely relax your arm by pretending it’s a heavy weight dangling at your side. When you deliver the strike,

slap through your target so forcefully that your energy transfer moves your body past where your target

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would have been.

If you maintain tension during the motion, the stiffness caused by the tension will slow down the strike and make the fingers and wrist vulnerable to injury. When the body is relaxed, the opened hand is capable of striking a target with a tremendous amount of energy.

The mechanism for delivering this powerful slap is the second key to an effective technique.

This delivery method, referred to as the double-hip principle, is a whipping action similar to the way one would serve a tennis ball. The hip on our non-striking side is the first to move. This motion is followed by the other hip to provide a whiplash effect in your upper body, catapulting the relaxed arm and open hand towards and through your target.

Think of your striking hand as a 20 pound weight hanging at your side. This visualization will require you to use the twin motion of the hips to whip your hand at your target. Because this technique requires you to be stationary when you discharge your slap, plan on this method as 'first strike' strategy. Due to lowering of the striking hand required for an effective launch, the defender appears non-aggressive in his defensive

posture while in actuality, chambering his hand for the surprise slap. The non-striking forward hand should be used to distract the assailant with some cautionary gesture.

The power slap achieves its power from its circular movement toward its target in a manner different from a straight-line punch.

Think of cutting down a tree: the most powerful and efficient means of doing so is with a cutting tool moving in the path of an arc as opposed to a stabbing motion. Similarly, the circular open hand slap delivers considerably more power than the stabbing motion of an in-line punch.

The power slap combines body language, striking physics and understanding of strategy to make it an awesome pre-emptive weapon. If you injure your hand while delivering a closed fist punch to your opponent's head, that strike best be the knockout blow that ends the confrontation since you can no longer rely on that injured hand as a potent weapon in your arsenal to defend yourself. Don't underestimate the power slap as being ineffective. Just ask Emanuel Yarbrough. The bigger they are, the harder they fall.

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### Resources for the Study of TaeKwonDo Patterns

The best resource was the author, General Choi, but he

is no longer with us.

Second best would be his most recent advanced practitioner contacts actually training with him, such as C.E. Sereff, Phap Lu, and Choi, Jung Hwa. (All human communication can be flawed, but expertise minimizes the chance of poor communication.)

Third best would be the General's statements in seminars if questions are properly understood on both ends. (Sometimes he could misspeak, sometimes the question or its answer could be misunderstood due to language differences.)

The best written resource is the Condensed Encyclopedia, last edition. Next is the Encyclopedia of TaeKwon-Do, Fourth Edition, especially on footwork. Next would be older editions of the foregoing.

An excellent resource is a teacher skilled in interpreting the foregoing. It takes about twenty years to achieve a reasonable familiarity. Less experienced teachers may also be of value. It is important that the teacher be dedicated to constant review of his assumptions rather than having "fixed" views.

The Legacy CD-ROM is superb on pacing. Note that there is a reason the "top guys" don't tape themselves doing patterns. At speed, we all err over time.

A fair resource are the USTF Patterns Workout Manuals., the more recent the better.

Stay away from Southwest Karate Association materials, and Joon Rhee's and Hi il Cho's books.,

--F.M. Van Hecke